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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000749

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE NATSIOS AND AF/SPG, NSC
FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [UG](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: SUDAN/UGANDA/CONGO: PLANS FOR LRA MOVEMENTS NOT
FINALIZED

REF: KHARTOUM 671

Classified By: Pol/Econ Nathan Holt: Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Proposed corridors for the movement of the Ugandan rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to a single assembly point on the Sudan/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border have not yet been accepted by LRA leadership, according to sources in ongoing peace talks between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (GOU). The Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) has been mediating the peace talks since 2006. GOSS and GOU military representatives issued a joint communique May 7 announcing routes LRA combatants could follow from northern Uganda and the Eastern Equatoria region of southern Sudan en route to the DRC border. Sources at the peace talks said they expected an LRA response to the proposal soon. Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) officials said they would provide food and other assistance to LRA groups within the corridors. However, the SPLA also acknowledges carrying out anti-LRA operations in Eastern Equatoria during the last month, both independently and in conjunction with the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF). Talks could resume this week, and take up the issue of justice and accountability for LRA leadership, including those indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC).
End Summary.

Proposed Corridors

¶2. (C) The issuance in Uganda of a joint UPDF-SPLA communique May 7 caught some officials on the GOSS mediation team by surprise. In any case, officials said, the proposed corridors have not yet been accepted by the LRA. The routes have been communicated to LRA chief Joseph Kony at his base in DRC's Garamba National Park, according to a member of the mediation team, and a response is expected soon.

¶3. (C) A senior SPLA official said the army would provide food to LRA groups en route to the Congo border. The SPLA, and third parties supporting the mediation team, had also offered to transport the LRA fighters from Eastern Equatoria and across the Nile to the designated Ri-Kwangba assembly point. The LRA had declined transportation assistance, sources said, and has sent several small groups east from the Sudan/DRC border area to guide fellow fighters back to either the assembly point or Kony's nearby base in DRC.

14. (C) In an April 13 meeting at the Sudan/DRC border, a mediation team led by former Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano and GOSS Vice President Riek Machar persuaded the parties to renew the lapsed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The parties also agreed that the LRA could assemble at Ri-Kwangba, but delayed for several weeks of intensive, behind-the-scenes consultations on how this movement would be accomplished.

Anti-LRA Operations in Eastern Equatoria

15. (C) Meanwhile, the SPLA has carried out several small-scale anti-LRA operations in Eastern Equatoria, according to senior army officers. These operations have been conducted both independently and in conjunction with the UPDF, according to the officers. The operations have concentrated on Magwe County, dominated by the Acholi ethnic group. Residents report that the LRA, also predominantly Acholi, have carried out devastating raids of foodstuffs and other material from local villages. The SPLA operations came in response to increasing political pressure to provide better protection to threatened civilians in the area.

16. (C) The SPLA-UPDF communique announcing the proposed corridors from Eastern Equatoria also includes tough language and sets a seven-day deadline for the LRA to move out of the region. GOSS President Salva Kiir has also expressed increasing impatience with continuing LRA attacks and the slow pace of the peace process. SPLA officials complained privately that they cannot continue indefinitely providing assistance to the LRA at assembly points while attacking them

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outside the assembly areas.

17. (C) Earlier in the peace talks, the LRA had agreed to assemble at Owiny-Kibul, near the Sudan/Uganda border in Eastern Equatoria. Citing threats from the UPDF, however, LRA forces never assembled at Owiny-Kibul and refused GOSS-provided food rations there. The LRA has accepted GOSS food at the Ri-Kwangba assembly point.

Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring
Teams Dispatched

18. (C) Members of the beefed-up Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT) were dispatched to Eastern Equatoria May 8 to assess the situation and monitor potential LRA movements. The CHMT is comprised of military representatives from the UPDF, the SPLA, the LRA and has been supplemented by representatives of various African states now participating in the peace talks as observers.

Not Clear When Talks Will Resume

19. (C) With the focus on potential LRA movements, it is not certain when peace talks will resume. GOSS mediators were surprised when the LRA delegation relented on demands for written assurances of good faith from the other parties and moved quickly to sign an interim agreement on "comprehensive solutions" May 2. The agreement is intended to address "root causes" of the conflict, one of several building blocks to a hoped-for comprehensive peace agreement. The protocol on "comprehensive solutions" grants none of the LRA's more extravagant political demands, according to members of the mediation team, and differs very little from the draft the mediators placed before the parties last December. Negotiations were adjourned after the signing of the "comprehensive solutions" agreement. Next on the agenda is a discussion of justice and accountability, including the issue

of whether ICC indictments of LRA leadership can be withdrawn or otherwise circumvented. Depending on whether LRA forces move peacefully to the designated assembly area, sources said, talks could resume as early as this week.

POWERS